

Upcoming Events—

Have an hour or two? Help is always appreciated at our information tables

Contact Marian Orvis - mforvet@comcast.net or 559-226-0145

March 7,8,9, Friday-Sunday Home and Garden Show – Fresno County Fairgrounds - Our table will be in the garden pavilion near those of other plant-related organizations. It is another great opportunity for community education and outreach. March always brings questions about wildflower viewing, planting, and identification, along with requests for water-wise plant suggestions. Volunteers will receive free admission to the entire show, as well as free parking in the vendor lot and a shuttle to/from the fairgrounds. Come, staff the table for a while, and spend the rest of the day at this huge show.

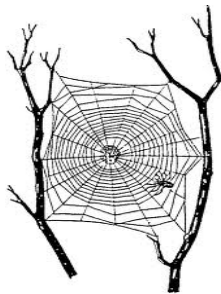
March 29, 2013, Saturday, 9 am - 2 pm Clovis Botanical Garden's annual event, "Spring into Your Garden." Our chapter will have an information table and Thelma Valdez will again present. Her topic: Native Plants: Getting Started

Observations

--from Jeanne Larson

Thursday, January 30, rainstorm will probably germinate broadleaves and a few grasses on the valley floor and foothills. I will be watching to see if the Bicolor Lupine and Bird's eye gilia that I broadcast in late November, on a nearby vacant lot, germinate. To date the very sandy, plowed up soil, has been bare. On the home front, the Bee's Bliss has open blooms. One Blue eyed grass is open, but is a loner in a large patch. California Poppies are here and there and will welcome the moisture. Mexican sage (*Salvia leucantha*) was burned back to the ground, but it had already been sending up new shoots protected by the frozen foliage. It will be interesting to see if it again blooms in spring and fall.

--from Thelma Valdez I'm a bit of a hawk when it comes to watching my garden's native plants push out new growth this time of year. I cheer now that the Harvest Brodiaea leaves have emerged from their summer dormancy in the hard, dry clay. I smile when I see the innocuous beginnings of Manzanita blossoms and the greening of native grasses that survive only on our minimal rain. Quiet anticipation. It's nice.



Gardeners will understand how this ongoing monitoring becomes second nature. I can spot the smallest change in the soil surface when a bulb begins to emerge or how much new growth is on certain plants by noting the color of the bark. I bought and an Apricot Mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) at the plant sale in September and planted it in early October. I checked it daily through the hard freeze. It lost the tallest of growth but today it is vigorously putting out new leaves, enjoying the warm weather to which its species is more accustomed. I'm hoping that if it likes 70 degrees in January, it will love 105 degrees in July!

--from Madeleine Mitchell I have to admit that I don't always read the *Fremontia*, Journal of the CNPS. It seems that it has changed or I'm more interested in natives now. Whatever the reason, in case some of you want to make some changes to your gardens or eliminate lawn watering during this drought there are some great ideas. I found a chart in the September 2013 issue on when to prune and deadhead. It was created to help the gardeners for parks, commercial or other native landscape maintenance. It even contains weed and pest management guidelines

China Creek report --Warren Shaw

At the November meeting, the China Creek crew concluded that Bull Thistle should be the next on our list of "Ten Most Wanted" weeds to target. Bull thistle, unlike Yellow Star Thistle, is never palatable to cattle, and is a prolific seed producer, and spreads its seed, on fluffy little parachutes, greater distances than YST. It has infested considerable areas of the park, but in the past, we've been so preoccupied with YST that we've dealt with it only cursorily.

So, in January we were prepared, with shovels and hoes and heavy gloves to attack, what we expected to be a new crop of Bull Thistle. To our surprise, due, we assume, to the drought, there WAS no new crop. In fact the park was almost entirely brown, with only some willows showing any sign of life.

So we cleaned up around the gate and the kiosk, walked the trail and picked up trash, took our usual break at 10:00, and went home.

Now, however, that we've had some rain, and residual soil temperatures remain unusually high, and days are getting longer, we expect Bull Thistle and all of our other weed enemies to be playing catch-up, so on Saturday, February 15 we expect to find better weed hunting. We'll work from 9:00-12:00, and we'd love to see some new faces. To get to the Park, take 180/kings Canyon east across Academy to Smith or Oliver. Turn south about 1/4 mi. past the school to Rainbow and Smith. Continue south on Smith about 1/4 mi. to the Park gate.

Questions? warshaw1955@gmail.com

Field Report Belinda Gilbert

Mid-winter is upon us, and I've been busy with outdoor projects. In January I raked and composted the leaves of fruit trees in my orchard to discourage the spread of boring insects and fungal diseases. Under the leaves I discovered native annuals growing: Miniature Lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), Red Maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*), Popcorn Flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*), Spanish Lotus (*Acemispion americanus*) and Farewell to Spring (*Clarkia purpurea*). The leaf cover provided a moist, protected seedbed for these plants. Under oak tree leaf mulch, Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), plus prolific, bright green Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata* and *C. parviflora*) have grown to about three inches in height.

On open hillsides, Miniature Lupine seedlings vary in color. On the open hillsides they are a grey-red due to cold while those under the cover of vegetation are green. Baby Blue Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Mustang Clover (*Leptosiphon montanus*), Baby Stars (*Leptosiphon bicolor*), Goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), Farewell to Spring and a commercial variety of California poppy are the "drought survivors" of winter 2014. Some of the "regulars" which I expect in a rainier year haven't germinated. It's a dry start to the 2014 growing season.

Some native seeds I've sown on my property at 3,000 feet elevation naturalize with ease: Chinese Houses (*C. heterophylla* and *tintora*), Mustang Mint (*Monardella brewerii*), Mustang Clover, Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata*), Whisker Brush (*Leptosiphon ciliatus*), *Nemophila heterophylla*, Rosin Weed (*Calycadenia multiglandulosa*), Whitewhorl Lupine (*Lupinus microcarpus* var. *densiflorus*) and Monkey Flower (*Mimulus guttatus*, in moist environments). All grow in many different exposures from seeds collected in the surrounding foothills. Other natives have spread exponentially from plant populations that occur naturally on my property. Weeding has been essential to their success.

Sowing native seeds on my property is an ever-changing work in progress. I sow native seeds with the best intentions, trying to observe the plant's niche (slope, exposure, soil and moisture, degree of shade and companion plants). Occasionally, I am successful on the second or third attempt. I tried to establish Baby Blue Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) several times in different locations. They naturalized last season when I planted seeds in a swale area, a moist and sunny location. Several dozen plants bloomed, produced seeds and germinated again this dry winter. It appears I finally found a good location! I am still trying, without success so far, to establish the following genera: *Delphinium*, *Lomatium*, Rock Cress (*Boechera* sp.), *Lessingia* and *Ranunculus*.

Recognizing germinating seedlings is challenging, such as identifying young native clover from non-native. Every year I remove two aggressive non-native species, Subterranean Clover and Rose Clover. Initially I couldn't tell the different clovers apart, so I basically removed all clovers. Luckily clover species seem resilient. There are three or four native species that germinate yearly, and I have learned to resist removing them until I can identify them.

Did you know the Lupine genus is considered toxic? According to Wikipedia, 44% of people with peanut allergies are also allergic to Lupines! They produce the alkaloids Lupinine and Sparteine, which are particularly toxic to sheep and cattle on western American ranges. All parts of the lupine plants are toxic, especially the pods and seeds. Lupine poisoning can cause heart and digestive problems, as well as nervousness. I became nervous just reading about it!

Every growing season is different. This winter, due to drought, there is less diversity in native and non-native plants that have germinated. Some species are more prolific, such as Miner's lettuce and Miniature lupine, and there is more open land, space to be filled. I'm hopeful for more rain, and I wait patiently for more annuals to germinate!

Why Bees are Disappearing

Recently we ran across this Ted Talk by bee expert (and bee lover) Marla Spivak. We highly recommend that you read or view the entire talk (both formats are available using key words). Below are some excerpts that seem particularly relevant to us as plant lovers. Dr. Spivak not only shares the bad news, but also ends with a hopeful note and some suggestions any of us can implement.

“Bees are the most important pollinators of our fruits and vegetables and flowers and crops like alfalfa hay that feed our farm animals. More than one third of the world’s crop production is dependent on bee pollination...



Honeybee on clover

Honeybees can be considered a super-organism, where the colony is the organism and it’s comprised of 40,000 to 50,000 individual bee organisms. Now this society has no central authority. Nobody’s in charge. So how they come to collective decisions, and how they allocate their tasks and divide their labor, how they communicate where the flowers are all of their collective social behaviors are mind-blowing. My personal favorite, and one that I’ve studied for many years, is their system of healthcare...So seven years ago, when honeybee colonies were reported to be dying en masse, first in the United States, it was clear that there was something really, really wrong...

We have half the number of managed hives in the United States now compared to 1945...and the reason is, after World War II, we changed our farming practices. We stopped planting cover crops. We stopped planting clover and alfalfa, which are natural fertilizers that fix nitrogen in the soil, and instead we started using synthetic fertilizers. Clover and alfalfa are highly nutritious food plants for bees. And after World War II, we started using herbicides to kill off the weeds in our farms. Many of these weeds are flowering plants that bees require for their survival. And we started growing larger and larger crop monocultures...

And then there’s pesticides. After WWII, we started using pesticides on a large scale and this became necessary because of the monocultures that put out a feast for crop pests...

And on top of everything else, bees have their own set of diseases and parasites. Public enemy number one for bees is a parasitic mite aptly named “varroa destructor.” It’s this big, blood-sucking parasite that compromises the bee’s immune system and circulates viruses...

So what are we going to do? What are we going to do about this big bee bummer that we’ve created? It turns out, it’s hopeful. It’s hopeful. Every one of you out there can help bees in two very direct and easy ways. Plant bee-friendly flowers, and don’t contaminate these flowers, this bee food, with pesticides. Go online and search for flowers that are native to your area and plant them. Plant them in a pot on your doorstep. Plant them in your front yard, in your lawns, in your boulevards. Campaign to have them planted in public gardens, community spaces, meadows. Set aside farmland. We need a beautiful diversity of flowers that blooms over the entire growing season, from spring to fall. We need roadsides seeded in flowers for our bees, but also for migrating butterflies and birds and other wildlife. And we need to think carefully about putting back in cover crops to nourish our soil and nourish our bees. And we need to diversify our farms. We need to plant flowering crop borders and hedgerows to disrupt the agricultural food desert and begin to correct the dysfunctional food system that we’ve created...”



Honeybee, manzanita

Some more news and a request

First, the request. How are you dealing with our current drought? We'd like to share with others any measures you have taken or plan to take. Please take a minute or two and send your thoughts on the matter to helshaw@gmail.com

Classes and events:

Wildflower walks—every Wednesday morning through the end of March. Meet at 10 AM at the Trailhead Camp at the BLM management Area. A hiking guide will lead an interpretive walk to “the green bridge” (approximately one mile). For more information 559-855-3492 (BLM, Auberry). \$5 day use fee. (Free to holders of parks senior card) From Hwy 168, take Auberry Rd., left on Powerhouse Rd., then left on Smalley a couple of miles, ending at parking area and guide.

Intermountain Nursery Classes-- for full schedule, fees, registration see intermountainnursery.com then “events & classes”

Spring Vegetable Garden Planning -- March 8th

Introduction to Permaculture – March 15

Beginning Beekeeping – April 5 or 6

Native Plants in the Landscape – April 26

Annual Water-Wise Plant Exchange – Saturday, May 3, 8-12

CSU Fresno Greenhouses. Barstow Ave., just east of Chestnut



Share water-wise plants from your garden or pick up Free plants, bulbs, cuttings, seeds, and trees. Master Gardeners, our CNPS chapter members, and other experts in native and water-wise plants will offer free advice for nurturing beautiful yards that thrive in our climate. Bring your questions about irrigation, problem plants, and annoying bugs. Fresno State students will be on hand to help.

Next Business meeting Sunday, March 16

The Directors, committee chairs, and any interested members are invited to our business meetings, held every other month at the home of Thelma Valdez. We gather at 12:30 for potluck lunch—outdoors, weather permitting. A discussion of short- and long- term plans, upcoming events, committee reports, and issues of concern accompanies lunch and the meetings often finish with a walk around Thelma's acreage, most of which is devoted to plantings of natives. We are on our way home by 2:00-PM. All are invited and welcome. For directions: Thelma nmtv@unwiredbb.com. For an agenda: Marian Orvis mforvet@comcast.net

Membership

Thelma Valdez

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Thelma Valdez at nmtv@unwiredbb.com. The Sequoia chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.



Thanks to renewing members:

Anne Cameron, Clary Creager, Joanne Dean-Freemire, Dave Graber, MaryBeth Janzen, Earl Knobloch, Reagan O'Leary, Craig Poole, Alex Sherriffs, Peg Smith & Charles Peck, John Stebbins

NOTE: Sometimes renewal information does not trickle down to the chapter for one or two months after your renewal has been received in Sacramento. Therefore, January renewals may have actually occurred in November or December. We maintain a three-month grace period, which should ensure no lapse in your receipt of the newsletter.

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible. Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, and convenient, and reduces renewal-mailing costs. Visit www.cnps.org and click on the JOIN button.

Sequoia Chapter, CNPS
thanks Derrel's for their
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Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
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Next Newsletter: March 2014
Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@gmail.com. The deadline for the March newsletter is Friday, Mar. 7



JOIN



THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



RENEW

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news and announcements of activities and conservation issues; and our chapter newsletter, *Carpenteria*.

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____

- Student, Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$45
- Family, Group, or Library \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$300
- Benefactor \$600

Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

- New Member Renewing Member

California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, science, and conservation.

CARPENTERIA

February 2014



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

c/o Jeanne Larson ♦ 3457 Redlands ♦ Fresno, CA 93726

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell

Now that our San Joaquin Valley is officially in a Drought, it's time for me to enlarge my native plant garden by transplanting plants that need more sun.

It's about 1/2 drought tolerant natives and a mixed lawn and weeds. I have many mature salvias, Silver bush Lupines, 2 large Toyon, Redbud, Prunus Ilicifolia which is now a multi trunked tree, and other small plant with seasonal wildflowers. I will be using a couple of books for ideas: CA Native Plants for the Garden, by Bornstein, Fross, O'Brien and Designing CA Native Gardens by Keator and Middlebrook. I hope I'll have a meadow without mowing the grasses and wildflowers by this time next year.

I plan on eliminating my 18x18 lawn over the summer by disconnecting the rain bird sprinkler head and converting that line to drip where I need it. I may not plant much until fall unless I can transplant some native grasses to areas where I can water them by hand to help them get reestablished. I have many plants of *Nassella cernua*, *N. pulchra* and an overgrown *Mulhenbergia rigens*, that needs to be divided. Some of my other plants are now in too much shade from the Toyon and other shrubs. The coast Douglas Iris didn't bloom much last spring, I know they need more sun, so they might get moved sooner if I can get my helper to dig out some of the lawn soon. My husband, Paul isn't too happy about losing another lawn, but I hope he'll grow to like it. We still have the hybrid buffalo grass in the full sun area in the back yard and I think my cats enjoy it more than Paul. They roll around and pretend to be hunting because I rarely mow it. In fact, I use an electric weed eater to cut it once or twice in the summer. Stay tuned as I start yet another project. I'm stir crazy right now after 6 weeks of using a walker with pain from a fall right before Christmas. Fractured my pelvis and sacrum and it is still painful to walk.



Lupinus albifrons



February 2014

Sequoia Chapter CNPS

The Spring Rain

Spring rain:
Everything just grows
More beautiful

Chiyo-ni

